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National



Tribune

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ESTABLISHED 1877—NEW SERIES.

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VOL. XVII—NO. 22—WHOLE NO. 865.

LETTERS OF

CHAS. A. DANA.

Terse, Telling Reports to War Department from the Front.

III.

AFTER CHICKAMAUGA.

Occupation of Chattanooga Begun. Rosecrans's Men Confident—Bragg's Portentous Display—Union Leader Determines to "Fight it Out"—Responsibility for Chickamauga.

OUR LAST WEEK'S INSTALLMENT of telegrams from Charles A. Dana to the Secretary of War ended with those sent from Chattanooga, on the afternoon of Sept. 21, 1862, the day after the battle of Chickamauga had ended, and while Gen. Thomas was still standing sternly at bay at Rossville Gap, and offering the rebels a renewal of the battle, which they declined to accept.

That night Gen. Thomas withdrew into Chattanooga, and the real occupation began. The next afternoon Dana telegraphed the Secretary of War:

CHATTANOOGA, Sept. 22; 3 p. m. Whole army withdrew into this place last night without difficulty, leaving only necessary outposts and parties of observation.

The troops arrived here about midnight in wonderful spirits, considering their excessive fatigues and heavy losses. They have been working all day improving rifle-pits. Line of defense is about three miles long, crossing the peninsula some two miles from its extremity. It includes two redoubts erected by rebels, and is pretty strong, though much weakened by a blunder made by somebody in pushing McCook's wing half mile forward of line designed by Chief Engineer Morton. This cannot be remedied to-day, but if possible mistake repaired to-night.

McCook holds the right, that noble old hero Thomas the center, the weakest part of the line, and Crittenden the left. The enemy have been approaching all morning in three columns, resisted by our advance parties, but the artillery firing has now drawn very near and battle may be fought before dark. Rosecrans estimates our effectives at 30,000 besides cavalry, but I fear our numbers are hardly so great as that.

There are provisions here for 15 days. Mass of cavalry under Mitchell has been sent across river to guard the road to Bridgeport via Jasper, and to strengthen Wilder, who is watching forces above here. Mitchell will find fine forage for horses, of which none is here.

Only cavalry remaining on this side are Minty's Brigade, in front toward Rossville and Missionary Ridge, and Watkins's Brigade, left behind by Mitchell, and now making its way over Lookout Mountain.

How large force enemy brings here, you know as well as we. He was overtaken and slaughtered on Sunday, but certainly our numbers this army even if he has received no reinforcements. Our losses on that awful day are still uncertain. Four thousand wounded have already been sent hence to Bridgeport.

Gen. King, commanding brigade of Regulars, went into action with 1,600, brought out only 450. He lost two battalions, taken prisoners. Gen. Baird, who commanded Rosecrans's Division, estimates his loss in prisoners at 2,000, though his line never flinched. This army looks anxiously for reinforcements. No signs of approach of Burnside.

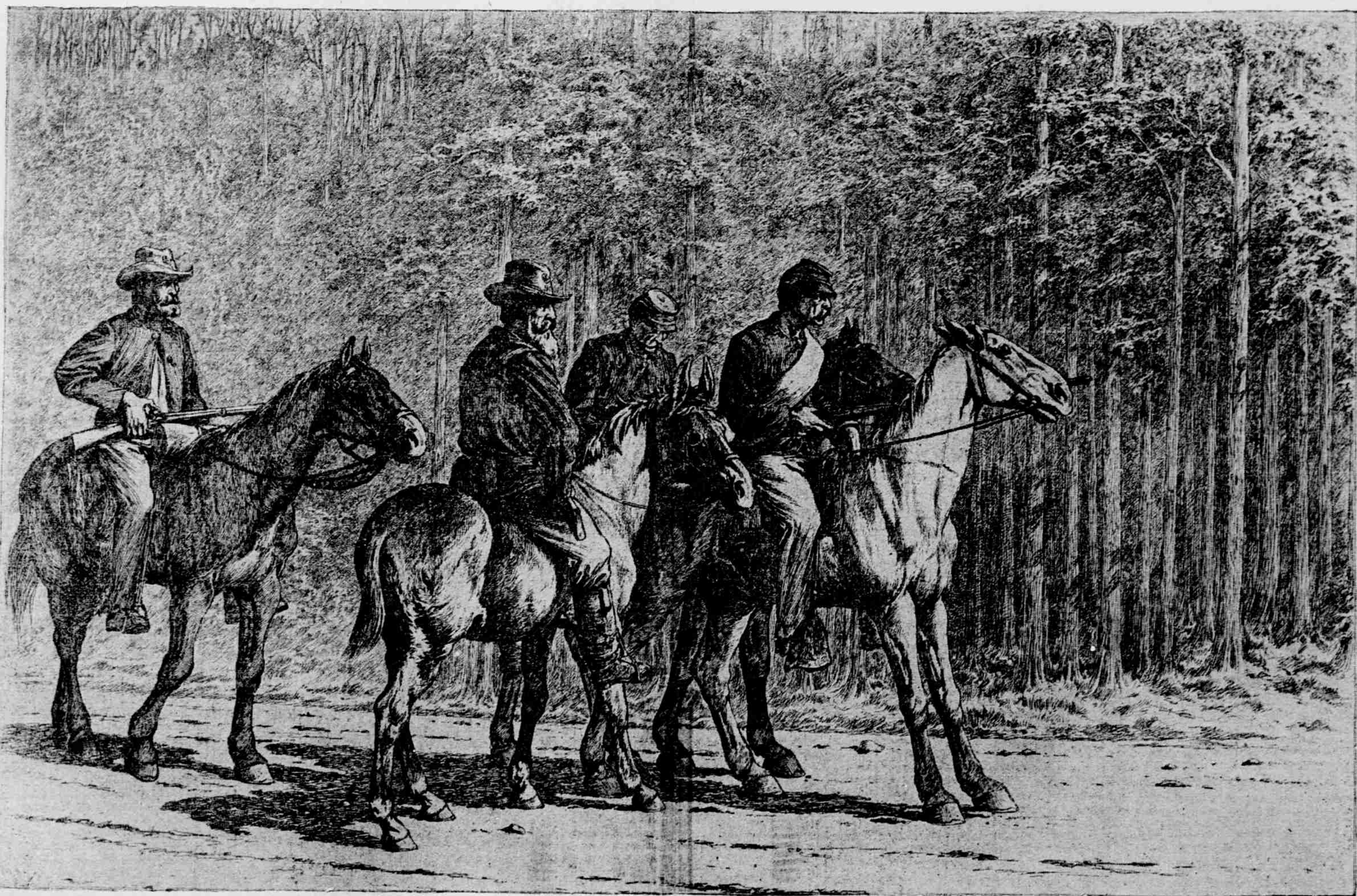
As Dana says, the Army of the Cumberland had no idea that it was whipped. A small portion of it had been cut off from the main body, and terribly handled, but the remainder had successfully repulsed every one of the enemy's most savage assaults, and though they had suffered very severely, they felt confident they had punished the enemy terribly. They were as full of fight as ever, and quite confident of the result should the rebels renew the attack. From what Dana says in a dispatch sent on the evening of the same day, Gen. Rosecrans was not so confident as were the men under him:

6 p. m.—Rosecrans is considering question of retreat from here. I judge that he thinks that unless he can have assurance of ample reinforcements within one week the attempt to hold this place will be much more disastrous than retreat. That part of the army which was routed on Sunday is much demoralized. If you have any advice to give it should come to-night.

ROSECRANS STIFFENED UP. It would seem probable that some hint of Rosecrans's discouragement got out, and that there was some energetic protest from everybody against giving up Chattanooga, that Rosecrans changed his mind during the next three hours, and decided to stay and fight it out, though it seemed inevitable that the rebels would renew the battle at once. Later in the evening Dana telegraphed:

9:30 p. m.—Rosecrans has determined to fight it out here at all hazards. The official returns show the army to consist of 35,000 effectives. There are here 10 days' full rations sufficient for 20 days in case of need. Besides, it will be difficult for enemy to interfere with our hauling from Bridgeport via Jasper. Of ammunition there is enough here for two days' hard fighting in field, and this will last much longer behind rifle-pits. The enemy will most probably attack in morning.

A GRAND BLUFF. Gen. Bragg made a grand "bluff" on Sept. 23, to get our army to evacuate Chattanooga, and put itself behind the cover of the Tennessee River. He massed his superior forces in a very



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"THE BUMMERS."

A Cautious Halt.—"They're Jummies, sure as yer born, boys."

The "Bummers" came into existence and fame during Sherman's March to the Sea. Previous to that time there had been "foraging parties," but they were regular, well-ordered expeditions, sent out for a definite purpose, which they executed and returned to camp. There had been private raids for such provisions as could be found in the country, which were sternly repressed and severely punished when detected, in the early years of the war, under the "rebel union-patch-guarding" policy of McClellan and Buell.

Their successors were less rigorous. The army had been steadily growing up to the policy of "living off the country" when Sherman started from Atlanta to Savannah, and it became part of his policy in that great raid. But little fighting was anticipated—at least in the interior. The greatest danger was that the army might be starved. To prevent this Gen. Sherman outlined a "swath" through the State, 60 miles wide, from which he proposed to draw supplies. Every morning details of men went out from each regiment to scour the country and bring in all available food for man and beast. The crops had just been harvested, and were collected in barns and granaries. While this movement was taking place the enemy suddenly fell upon Davis as he was marching by the left flank. The attack was tremendous, and resulted in our later's right, and formed the right extremity of our line, was also engaged in moving by the flank at double-quick time and in line of battle, when Davis broke. Sheridan had not time to halt, and attempted to convert his movement into a charge, but it failed, of course, and his men became routed also.

Had McCook taken the right place in the morning his movement to the left, passing over a shorter distance, would have been completed and Davis and Sheridan would not have been taken in flank and routed. These two Generals, however, remained and rallied their men, as did Van Cleve, who was almost as badly dissolved as they; but McCook and Crittenden, two corps commanders, made their way here and slept here all night, and did not look after their troops till Monday. True they were tired, but so were those who remained and fought the glorious battle of Sunday afternoon, in which Granger would seem to have been right when he pronounced the enemy defeated and urged Thomas to disregard Rosecrans's orders to retire on the ground that latter was at Chattanooga ignorant of the facts.

Fourth, the attempt of Rosecrans to reinforce the left wing when Thomas reported it had been forced to fall back. In this attempt he necessarily had to move troops from the right, the whole reserve being already engaged. While this movement was taking place the enemy suddenly fell upon Davis as he was marching by the left flank. The attack was tremendous, and resulted in our later's right, and formed the right extremity of our line, was also engaged in moving by the flank at double-quick time and in line of battle, when Davis broke. Sheridan had not time to halt, and attempted to convert his movement into a charge, but it failed, of course, and his men became routed also.

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By noon the prospects of attack were yet imminent, but confidence was increasing. Dana telegraphed:

1:30 p. m.—Enemy still slowly advancing three columns, but no attack yet. Our rifle-pits are now strong, and every preparation complete as possible considering shortness of time. Ammunition-train of 50 wagons from Bridgeport has arrived, increasing our supply materially. Orders have been given to construct interior line of defenses, so that 5,000 to 10,000 troops can hold the place and rest of army move wherever needed. This will probably be accomplished to-night. Official report received from Burnside's advance, which was at Athens night before last. Mass of his forces far behind that place. Rosecrans advises Burnside to come here by road on the north side Tennessee River.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHICKAMAUGA. As noon passed without an attack, the belief that one would be made diminished rapidly, and an opportunity was given to think of other things. Dana took advantage of this to discuss the events of the terrible days on the banks of the Chickamauga:

2 p. m.—After careful study of the disaster to our right wing on Sunday, I am of opinion that it arose from the following causes: First, great numerical superiority of the enemy. Second, the too great extent and consequent thinness of our line. Third, and in its results the most fatal of all, the disobedience of orders of Gen. McCook in placing his corps from one-third to one-half mile farther to the right than he had been directed, thus elongating the line still farther.

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They were passionately fond of a stirring set-to with "all enemies and opposers whatsoever." They made the March to the Sea a triumphal success, and then gathered into solid ranks again for assaulting the fortifications around Savannah. Fortunately this was only necessary in the capture of Fort McAllister, which they took in "one-two-three" order.

They deployed again for the great march through the Carolinas. This was not as much of a picnic as the march through Georgia, for it was now Winter, with its storms, its rains, its swollen rivers, and fatigues mud. The country was much poorer, the enemy more numerous and stubborn. There was vastly more hardship, personal discomfort and bitter fighting. But the "Bummers" alone even more brilliantly than during the Indian Summer excursion through Georgia. The country rang with the fame of his exploits, and when at last the combined armies marched up Pennsylvania avenue, Washington, in the Grand Review, the men who attracted the most attention and received the greatest applause were Sherman's dauntless "Bummers."

Lookout Mountain yesterday and compelled a regiment Rosecrans had left at Summertown, on the head of mountain, to guard signal station to retire. Another rebel column on Missionary Ridge on east side Chattanooga Valley, and no doubt mass of their infantry is in that valley in front of us. Rosecrans will make reconnaissance in force to-day.

With our present defenses it is very desirable they should attack us.

THE BLUNDERS OF CHICKAMAUGA. By noon Dana had leisure to return to the consideration of Chickamauga, and dispatches:

12 m.—Words telegram 21st you desire repeated are: "With the electrical courage of a Noy." My cipher clerk, myself, shall be more careful.

In my report yesterday upon causes of Sunday's disaster to our right wing I omitted to mention, under my second head, that, before the battle began, Rosecrans evidently saw that his line was too long, and then attempted to shorten it. To this end he withdrew Negley's Division from the place assigned to it, between Reynolds and Brannan, and placed Negley as a support, behind Baird, on the extreme left. The gap thus made in the line he filled by moving Brannan, Johnson and Wood to the left, leaving a gap which he intended to fill by crowding Davis and Sheridan likewise to the left, which would have made the whole line shorter by the extent of one division.

But before this operation could be completed the battle became so hot that, instead of filling this gap in the manner he had intended, he had to precipitate Van Cleve's Division into it, thus leaving himself no reserves and no means of reinforcing the left wing, except by withdrawing forces from his right, and in the very act of this withdrawal the enemy fell upon him.

It is plain that having committed an error in too much extending his line originally, he committed another and a more pregnant error in the mode of contracting it which he adopted.

The fatal consequences of these errors might have been escaped but for the fact of that dangerous blunderhead McCook, who always imperils everything.

During the day the Army of the Cumberland, not being attacked, took up the offensive itself, and the result of a reconnaissance infused the belief that Bragg did not really intend to attack. In the evening Dana telegraphed:

8:30 p. m.—Reconnaissance in force to-day shows enemy encamped on Chattanooga Creek along base Lookout Mountain. Probably other camps east of Missionary Ridge on Chickamauga. No other places near here where an army can find water. No distinct evidence rebels intend attack Chattanooga, nor is it certain all Bragg's army is here, nor are there any signs he is moving elsewhere.

TWO MORE QUIET DAYS. The movements of the next two days confirmed this. The army began to realize how powerful was the force which attacked them, and which was

still in front of them, but which they had fought to a standstill. Hopes were still entertained that Burnside would come up, and then they could resume the offensive. Dana reports:

CHATTANOOGA, Sept. 25; 10:30 a. m. No demonstration from enemy. A Captain of our cavalry out on scouting expedition with 35 men came in last night, making his way through Bragg's camps on Chickamauga east of Missionary Ridge. Led by a shrewd guide he came through by-ways in the woods, and was not seen till he reached infantry pickets at west base of ridge, and there he dashed through, losing four men. He re-

ports the Chickamauga Valley full of rebels. Evidently gross of rebel army is there. McCook reports this morning from our right that noise of wagons and artillery moving was heard during the night. He thinks rebel force discovered on Chattanooga Creek by reconnaissance yesterday has been

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Leading Incidents and Episodes of the War of the Rebellion.

III.

JOHN BROWN.

(Continued.)

A Short-Lived Triumph—Brown Might Have Escaped, but Lingered in Harper's Ferry—Assailed by Federal and State Troops—The Trial—Brown's Defense.

THE PASSENGER TRAIN that sped eastward from Harper's Ferry, by Brown's permission, in the early morning of Monday, Oct. 17, left that place completely in the military possession of the insurrectionists. They held, without dispute, the Arsenal, with its offices, workshops, and grounds. Their sentinels stood on guard at the bridges and principal corners, and were seen walking up and down the streets.

Every workman who ignorantly approached the Arsenal, as day dawned, was seized and imprisoned, with all other white males capable of making any trouble. At eight o'clock, the number of prisoners had been swelled to 60-odd, and the work was still proceeding.

But it was no longer entirely one-sided. The white Virginians, who had arms, and who remained unmolested in their houses, prepared to use them. Soon after daybreak, as Brown's guards were bringing two citizens to a halt, they were fired on by a man named Turner, and, directly afterward, by a grocer named Boerly, who was instantly killed by the return fire.

Several Virginians soon obtained possession of a room overlooking the Arsenal gates, and fired thence at the sentinels who guarded them, one of whom fell dead, and another—Brown's son Watson—was mortally wounded. Still, throughout the forenoon, the liberators remained masters of the town. There were shots fired from one side or the other at intervals, but no more casualties reported.

The prisoners were by turns permitted to visit their families under guard, to give assurance that they still lived and were kindly treated. Had Brown chosen to fly to the mountains with his few followers, he might still have done so, though with a much slenderer chance of impunity than if he had, according to his original plan, decamped at midnight, with such arms and ammunition as he could bear away.

Why he lingered, to brave inevitable destruction, is not certain; but it may fairly be presumed that he had private assurances that the negroes of the surrounding country would rise at the first flicking of his movement, and come flocking to his standard; and he chose to court the desperate chances of remaining where arms and ammunition for all could abundantly be had. That he afterward said that he had not enough already, either on or about the premises; but, if so, why seize Harper's Ferry at all?

ITS DOOM SEALED.

At all events, if his doom was already sealed, his delay at least hastened it. Half an hour after noon, a militia force, 100 strong, arrived from Charlestown, the County-seat, and were rapidly disposed so as to command every available exit from the place. In taking the Shenandoah bridge, they killed one of the insurgents, and captured William Thompson, a neighbor of Brown at Elba, unwounded.

The rifle works were next attacked, and speedily carried, being defended by five insurgents only. These attempted to cross the river, and four of them succeeded in reaching a rock in the middle of it, whence they fought with 200 Virginians, who lined either bank, until two of them were dead, and a third mortally wounded, when the fourth surrendered.

Kagi, Brown's Secretary of War, was one of the killed. William H. Leeman, one of Brown's Captains, being pursued by scores, plunged into the river, a Virginian wading after him. Leeman turned round, threw up his empty hands, and cried, "Don't shoot!" The Virginian fired his pistol directly in the youth's face—he was but 22—and shattered his head into fragments.

SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES.

By this time, all the houses around the Arsenal buildings were held by the Virginians. Capt. Turner, who had fired the first shot in the morning, was killed by the sentinel at the Arsenal gate, as he was raising his rifle to fire. Here Dangerfield Newby, a Virginia slave, and Jim, one of Col. Washington's negroes, with a free negro, who had lived on Washington's estate, were shot dead; and Oliver Brown, another of the old man's sons, being hit by a ball, came inside of the gate, as his brother Watson had done,

(Continued on third page)